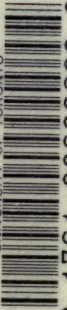


SOME
VERSE
by F.S.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

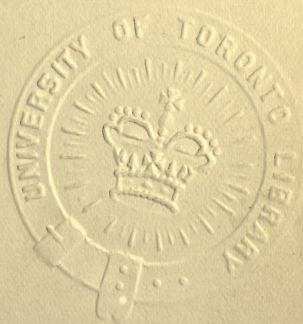


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Some Verse

by
[^{Frank}F. S. Sidgwick.]



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Some Verse

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DEDICATION

To M.

*H*ERE is a number of verses for you
that I've written at various times,
Now because I had reason to write,
and now because I had rhymes :
For whether the trees supply me with tongues,
or I look for a sermon in stones,
Rhyme, Rhyme is the Body of Verse,
and Reason the Bones, the Bones !

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

MOST of the longer pieces in this book appeared some years ago in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and I have to thank the editor for permission to reprint them. At least one of the others was refused by *Punch*; for this also I have to thank the editor. I am also indebted to the editors of the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Englishwoman*, and other papers, for allowing me to reprint several pieces.

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When my Ship comes in.

WHEN my ship comes in, as it's bound to come,
I'll follow no poet to Innisfree,
For I don't much care for the honey-bee's hum,
And a clay-wattled cabin is not for me :
But I'll bid farewell to the life of a clerk,
And third-floor lodgings in Battersea Park ;
And pack a satchel, and oil my bike,
And ride till I find a house I like.

I don't want thorpes, or hangers, or holts,
Or grass by-lanes where a dog-cart jolts :
I am not of those whose hearts are set
On leasing a ' Bijou Maisonnette '—
Suburban horrors—I hate all such ;
I know what I want, and I don't want much :
Only a low two-storeyed home
Of old red brick and old brown wood,
On soil of gravel or good blue loam—
As long as the sanitation's good ;—
A house on a hill-side I'd like best,
With at least one window facing west.

For I think one room in every house
Should see the sun set through the boughs :
Though poets rejoice when the day declines

Athwart the stems of tall dark pines—
No pines for me, where the wind will sough ;¹
An apple orchard is good enough.¹
For in May, when the blossom is white and pink,
Imagine waking at six, to blink
At apple-blossom against blue sky—
Like a Japanese screen—and lazily lie
In a dimity cot, as white as snow !—
What dimity is, I don't quite know,
But it sounds all right for a cot, does dimity,
Breathing a sense of cosy sublimity.
—To wake, I repeat, in a fragrant room,
To pink-white masses of apple-bloom,
With little bits of the brightest blue
Of a May-morn welkin peeping through ;
Watching the martins dip and pass,
And the thrush with one eye cocked on the grass :—
And to nuzzle under the coverlet
And know that you need not get up yet !
Though sloth on a fine May-morn be sin,
A sinner I'll be—when my ship comes in !

My garden, too, will not be abnormal,
Nor yet Italian, and prim and formal :
A garden formed on a proper plan

¹ Pronounce to taste.

Shows Nature obeying the Hand of Man,
Not Artifice flaunting in Nature's dress,
Nor Man subduing the Wilderness.
So I'll have *parterres*, and a fountain-jet,
Lavender, roses, and mignonette ;
A wild place under the apple glades,
With cowslips springing between the blades ;
And honeysuckle and clematis bowers,
And sops-in-wine and gilly-flowers,
And London Pride and Love-lies-bleeding—
And a hireling knave to do the weeding !
And in gloaming time, when nightingales sing,
 As soon as my apple-trees allow,
I'll doze in the dusk in a hammock of string,
 Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

One room I'll have that's full of shelves
For nothing but books ; and the books themselves
Shall be of the sort that a man will choose
If he loves that good old word *PERUSE* :
The kind of book that you open by chance
To browse on the page with a leisurely glance,
Certain of finding something new,
Although you have read it ten times through.
I don't mean books like *Punch* in series,
Or all the volumes of *Notes and Queries* ;

But those wherein, without effort, your eyes
Fall where the favourite passage lies,
Knowing the page and exact position—
It's never the same in another edition !—
The Vicar of Wakefield, and *Evelina*,
Elia, *The Egoist*, *Emma*, *Catriona*,
Fuller and Malory, *Westward Ho* !
And the wonderful story of Daniel Defoe,
And Izaak Walton, and Gilbert White,
And plays and poetry left and right !
—No glass doors, and no 'fumed oak' ;—
Plain deal, and fumed by myself with smoke ;
Stained, if at all, to a pleasant brown,
With ledges and places for putting books down.
And there I'll sit by a blazing log
With a sweet old briar and glass of grog,
And read my *Pickwick*, *Pendennis*, *Huck Finn*,
Cosily there—when my ship comes in.

And, last, one point I can't forget ;
Man was not meant for solitude,
And those I cannot praise who let
' I care not ' wait upon ' I could.'
So when I can, 'twill be my care
To search the world and find the fair,
The chaste, and inexpensive she—

A 'managing' helpmate meet for me,
Who'll help to make the two ends meet,
By darning in a low arm-chair,
That lets the lamplight gently beat,
In the good old way, upon her hair . . .

But still I have my way to win ;
I wonder how these dreams begin ;
So far my ship has not come in !

The Velocipedia Britannica.

· **M**Y bicycle, my bicycle,
that liest where I lie,
I've merely strained a tendon,
but your time has come to die.
(We're tangled both together
in a dry but dirty ditch ;
I wish a friend would come along
and tell us which is which.)

—To die, I say ; you're human ;
I can't insult a bike
By talking of resilience
and hub-sprockets and the like ;
Nor do I think of blaming you ;
the best machine will skid
Upon a piece of orange-peel,
exactly as you did.

And now that you are lying,
my dear old ' safety ' wheel,
An armful of umbrella-ribs
and odds and ends of steel,
Stored memories of journeys made
by you and me awake ;
Mishap may take my breath away,
but them it cannot take.

We never broke a record—
 we never cared to try—
Except the one for loitering,
 my bicycle and I.
'Tis not with louts and motor-fiends
 that such as we compete ;
Ours is a tranquil travelling,
 and theirs the dust and heat.

Their Rhodes and Mitylene
 let other nations praise ;
Our roads are good enough for us,
 if you'll forgive the phrase ;
I mean the little winding lanes
 one only finds at home,
And not the hard high roads they made
 when all roads led to Rome.

The East may call her lovers
 to Islands of the Blest,
Where every prospect pleases
 and the weary are at rest,
Where ain't no Ten Commandments,
 and a man can raise a thirst—
But I, a little Englander,
 put little England first.

We've tried East Anglian drift-roads,
 explored the Pilgrim's Way,
Crossed tidal sands at Holy Isle,
 and stuck in Oxford clay ;
We've learnt the depth of Devon lanes,
 the height of Yorkshire dales,
And traced the chain of castled towns,
 the border-line of Wales.

We've passed by manor-houses
 with finials and things,
Stately Elizabethan fronts
 and Jacobean wings—
An 'eligible residence,'
 once called a 'stately pile,'
That tolerates humanity
 with wisdom in its smile.

We've had the wind behind us,
 and pedalling apace,
The beauty born of whirring wheels
 has passed into my face ;
We've climbed the hills together,
 and together known the joy
Of coasting down the other side,
 like H. C. Beeching's 'Boy.'

We've found the early cowslip,
 we've slept in fields of hay,
We've felt the spell of gorse in bloom,
 that made Linnæus pray,
Breathed deeply of the heather-bells,
 and underneath the moon
Tasted the South that blows across
 a field of beans in June.

We've faced the April showers
 that tarnish steel and paint ;
We've gone where bicycles may go
 as well as where they mayn't—
But now the times are changing,
 and I should not be surprised
To find the track up Sty Head Pass
 had been macadamised.

Ay, *tempora mutantur* ;
 the bicycle may rust,
While Urban District Councillors
 experiment with dust ;
While ranks of country constables
 are daily reinforced,
And many motor licenses
 remain to be endorsed.

Wherefore, all ye that list to hear
our noble England's praise,
Refuse to join the hymn of Speed
that spoils her quiet ways ;
Have done with sixty miles an hour,
and let your chauffeur smile
To learn that you prefer to spend
an hour on every mile.

Go learn the heart of England ;
there is no need to roam ;
The truest patriot begins,
like charity, at home ;
Familiarity with her
can never breed contempt—
The rule applies to other lands,
but England is exempt.

And how should they know England
who do not England know ?
—The question begs the question, true,
but still it serves to show
A paradox misquoted
is an axiom reversed—
She's all right when you know her,
but you've got to know her first.

An English Poet.

THE poet cried, 'I am obsessed,
And out of joint I find the times ;
Silent the Muse within my breast,
And lost my Dictionary of Rhymes.'
With that he bought an A B C,
And rose and twitched his mantle blue,
And caught a train at ten to three
At 'that world-earthquake, Waterloo.'

And ere the sun had made the round
Of Neptune's wash and 'Tellus' ground,
He lay full-fed on a sunny bank,
Where trees were leafy and grasses rank,
And meads were lush and berries ripe,
And filled and lit a favourite pipe,
And said to himself, 'I'll dream all day
On a bank where the time is whiled away.'
Then, wooed by the sound of babbling streams,
Fair visions thronged from the land of dreams ;
They came to plague, but remained to bless
His mind's subliminal consciousness.

The first was a maid with olive skin,
Dark hair looped up with a silver pin,
And night-black eyes, and an oval chin.

She spake to the poet : ' Wild thyme is sweet,
But don't let it grow beneath your feet ;
Rise up, rise up, and follow me
To the banks of distant Italy :
For Italian skies and streams are blue,
 And the shepherd pipes to the happy hills,
And sings that his love has proved untrue—
In the way that loves so often do—
And that love, after all, is for the few,
 And is only one of the minor ills.
So rise, my friend, and follow me
To the land where hearts and morals are free,
And thee will I show
How the white lilies grow
On the banks of distant Italy.'

But the poet said, ' Though the streams be blue,
There are marshes, I've heard, and malaria too ;
And though you boast of your cloudless skies,
I understand there are clouds—of flies ;
And as for Italian shepherds' morals,
It wasn't in ethics I earned my laurels ;
If hearts are free I will let them be,
And I will not go where the white lilies grow
(If the fact that you mention is really so)
On the banks of distant Italy.'

Italy passed ; and the next maid came,
And the poet immediately guessed her name ;
For she bore a harp, and her dress was green,
And her dusky hair made a shadowy screen,
And she walked with the grace of a royal race,
And Mr. Yeats would have called her Cathleen.
She spake, and her voice was sweet and soft
As a breeze in the eaves of an old hay-loft :
' Know'st thou the land where mists are drawn
O'er the face of eve and the face of dawn,
Where the wild hill sleeps as the wide mist creeps,
And weeping wakes and waking weeps ;
Where the maids are picturesquely dressed,
And their cheeks are caressed by the wet south-west ;
Where the pig in the bog for potatoes digs,
And the people partake of potatoes and pigs ;
Where, twilight and noon, the old wives croon
Of the land that lies beyond all eyes,
East of the sun and west of the moon ?
I do be thinking,' the maiden said,
' 'Tis easy sailing from Holyhead.'

And the poet cried, ' I have often sailed
For the land of Erin, " where all has failed " ;
And the breeze that brushes
The maidens' cheeks

As they go cutting rushes
 On Macgillicuddy Reeks,
 And the mists and potatoes and pigs, as you say,
 Are doubtless excellent things in their way ;
 But, though an impartial unprejudiced man,
 I hold by the proverb of *μηδὲν ἄγαν*,
 Finding the pleasures of Ireland pall
 When the Celtic twilight is over all :
 Yes, *μηδὲν ἄγαν* is the song I sing,
 A motto to which I intend to cling ;
 For it's Old High Dutch for *not too much*,
 Or *moderation in everything*.
 And back to the land, where mists are drawn
 O'er the face of eve and the face of dawn
 Went Cathleen, daughter of Houlihaun.

Followed a hundred beautiful shades,
 Their countries' representative maids ;
 Bretons and Normans and Danes and Swedes,
 Dancers of Spain with castanets,
 The graceful shapes the Maremma breeds,
 Turkish houris with cigarettes,
 Dutch, Tyrolese, and Portuguese,
 Flemish and Basque—O, a maiden-masque !

Then, as the threads of sleep unravelled,
 The poet awoke : and he cried, ' I have travelled

Far from the land where I was born,
Through the Ivory Gate and the Gate of Horn.
And whether it be that nut-brown stingo
That's making me feel so remarkably jingo,
Or what it may be—I cannot explain—
But I'm truly relieved to be home again.
O maids, each one your country's queen,
 Pretty or plain, and puny or plump,
Types of Beauty or Hygiene,
 Depart, evade, excede, erump !
Begone, burnous, Zouave, and smock,
 And frills that tickle the foreign taste :
I know a maid in a holland frock
 With a touch of Cambridge blue at the waist,
Who would tramp with me through highland ling,
 Or moorland purples or midland greens,
When storm-clouds break and east winds sting,
 Which would blow you chits to smithereens.
Give *me* but a corner of English ground,
And let me watch the endless round
Of flower and fruit and blossom and seed
In hill and valley and tilth and mead !
Shower or sun suffices us,
Or the march of the cirrho-cumulus,
Or the rains that roar, or the winds that whelm,
And the sun-dappled sward beneath the elm,

And the noble oaks that Time so gnarls
That the bumpkin says they hid King Charles ;
And the daffodils and sweet blue-bells,
And the wayside smells, and the dairy smells,
With Tennyson's bees and doves in the trees,
And rivulets hurrying through the leas.'

And the poet went back to the *Rose and Crown*
And dined on a pound of steak, washed down
With a pint and a half of the true nut-brown,
And in the morning returned to town.

An Antient Poem.

WYNTER ys i-cumen in ;
Lhoundly syng *tish-ù* !
Wyndës blo and snoeth sno,
And al ys icë nu.
(Syng *tish-ù* !)

Leggës trembel after bath,
And fyngrës turneth blu,
Wisker freseth, nosë sneseth—
Merie syng *tish-ù*—
—*tish-ù*—
—*tish-ù*—
Wel singest thou *tish-ù* ;
Ne stop thou never nu !

A Grammarian's Wedding.

[NOTE.—The following lines, recovered from the fly-leaves of a visitor's book at an inn near Florence, appear to form a companion poem to *A Grammarian's Funeral* by Robert Browning, one of whose literary characteristics was a preference for recondite subjects. There would seem to be little doubt that they refer to the story of Speroni Panvinius (as narrated by Bellarmine), who was born in 1501, and educated at Bologna under the learned Pomponiatus. He is only less celebrated than his son, Onuphrius, the historian, possibly the offspring of the union recorded below, though another story says that Panvinius was married at least twice.]

LET us¹ begin to drag our happy pair
Lapped in their fond ease ;
With blank-verse march our *Io Hymen* share
Dactyls and spondees.
Not in the streets, for idle fish-eyed gaze,
Pull we the carriage ;
June shall shed blossoms from her country ways,
Blessing this marriage.
Sharp to the turn !—we tramp a sweeter gait
Far from the traffic.
So ! with iambic left-right alternate
Last of the Sapphic,
Honouring more our Master—he who first
Scanned the Greek chorus,

¹ The speaker is one of a class of pupils attending the marriage of their master to a girl-pupil. The poem gives an insight into an early system of co-education.

Schemed Galliambic, and correctly versed
Tryphiodorus,

Numbered Lucretius' penthemimerals,
Ruled his cæsura.

(Strain, biped steeds ! what though the yoke-rope galls?—
*Iliad dura !*¹—

Think what's his bee-buzz on her petal lips—
Epithalamium !—

She silent fragrance to the sound that sips,
Though but her name he hum !)

Sweet as the Sea-Born,² as Athena wise,
Glowing as Hebe,

We marked the maid, and said, ' Our Master's prize
Only must she be ! '—

She, the dear promise of an April day
Slipped from Olympus !

(Hear Laughter-Lover to the Eyes of grey,
' How mortals imp us ! ')

May fed the hope her June has now fulfilled—
Sure diagnosis !

Ah, but in May a few of us were thrilled !—
(That's a *meiosis*³)—

¹ An Horatian quotation, which may be translated 'put your backs into it.'

² Aphrodite or Venus. So 'Laughter-Lover' below.

³ An under-statement.

All ; though no envy where there lay no hope
 Save of disasters ;
 Each Jack, too, had his Jill, no misanthrope !—
 She was our Master's.
 True, our Bombastes, poor fool, mocked that we
 Brooked such deprival,
 Swore, with the valour of the emphatic d——,
 Rout for the rival,
 Ambushed our lady, and with all the art
 Wine could provide him
 Pleading, until she from a tender heart
 Gently denied him.
 How we then planned, despaired, hoped, plotted, guessed,
 Wondered, conjectured !
 Fire in her eyes alone of all the rest
 Watched him who lectured ;
 Not till he met it could her brave gaze shift,
 Δία γυναικῶν !¹
 Our sappy pines on winter hearths burn swift ;
 Swifter the dry cone.
 Poring on scholiast script with single eye,
 Poor Polyphemus !
 Nursing a goddess—we, the common fry—
 How should he deem us ?

¹ 'God-like among women'—an Homeric phrase.

What else drove blood in wizened cheek again,
 Gave him his two eyes ?
We pushed a Galatea ¹ in his ken,
 Her and her blue eyes !
 Hopes lit him; questioned qualms 'If Love should cheat ?'
 (How the days wore on !)
 Age posed his bitter 'gainst her springing sweet ;
 'There's *oxymoron* !' ²
 Aye, and the oil and water in one flask ?—
 Æschylus hints it.' ³
 What's Nature or her laws ? That's Love's own task ;
Omnia vincit ! ⁴

Omnia vicit, too ! (What coward jeers
 'Atropos occat' ?' ⁵
 On *this* day speak of the abhorrèd shears ?
 What's here to mock at ?

¹ Galatea was a maid with whom, according to Theocritus, Polyphemus fell in love.

² A classical figure, signifying the collocation of opposites.

³ Cf. *Agamemnon*, 322. Æschylus actually says '*vinegar* and oil'; but the result is the same.

⁴ '*Omnia vincit amor*,' 'Love conquers all'; from Vergil's *Eclogues*. The change of tense in the next line implies 'Love conquered all,' in this case.

⁵ Part of a Latin hexameter, meaning that, of the Three Fates, Clotho held the distaff, Lachesis span, and Atropos cut the thread. The anticipation of Milton, *Lycidas*, 75, is interesting.

‘Mori memento,’ quoth Bombastes ; hark

Knell to the nuptial !—

Roll hounds i’ th’ ditch ! to-day no dog shall bark,

No, nor a pup shall !)

Here’s the wreathed cottage, fit for them alone.

Peace to our shoving !

Our part is done ; the rest is all their own,

Living and loving.

Over the threshold lift his laughing bride—

Don’t let it trip her !

Shut the door . . .

H’mph ! it’s autumn now outside.

There ! the last slipper !

Imaginary Correspondence

Between Walt Whitman and Austin Dobson.

WALT WHITMAN TO AUSTIN DOBSON

I WHO have walked splay-footed in hobnailed boots,
I who have written at large in sesquipedalian lines,
I am eager for juxtaposition of mutual antagonisms.
The formule of splay-footedness is the formule of sesquipedalian lines ;
But your formule, camerado, is the formule of varnished pumps and minuets ;
You have minced through life, minion camerado,
You have minced with Q. Horatius Flaccus, Proverbs in
 Porcelain, Beaux in Brocade, and Roses in Bonnets.
Juxtapose yourself, I beg ;
Exude me the efflux of your eighteenth-century soul ;
Lilt me a lyric, lisp in numbers, curt and compt ;
Exude to me, minion to monster, pump to hobnail ;
By return mail exude !

AUSTIN DOBSON TO WALT WHITMAN

I send no gem across the sea ;
 I, like most rhymesters, more's the pity,
Omnibus horis cannot be
 Witty.

I have no mine of Attic salt,
Nor will I delve, a hireling pitman,
In others' classic wit-mines, Walt
Whitman !

Light numbers, raised by heat of youth,
Ad unguem facti, come no longer :
Age plays at strength, but finds the truth
Stronger.

Nor could I ask you to defray
The tariff charged on things of beauty,
For works of art imported pay
Duty.

Yet if my Muse without impost
May greet her grave and reverend neighbour,
Duty *thus* paid will not be lost
Labour.

Imaginary Conversation

Between Thomas Moore and Mr. W. B. Yeats.

[SCENE: *The Zoological Gardens.* TIME: *A summer night.* MR. YEATS *is studying birds in moonlight.* The Shade of THOMAS MOORE *rolls towards him, slightly intoxicated.*]

MOORE (*sings*):

THE young May moon is beaming, Yeats,
The glow-worm's lamp is gleaming, Yeats,
How sweet to mark
In Regent's Park
That the drowsy world is dreaming, Yeats!

YEATS (*absently fixing an inspiration*):

The cranes are meagre in moonlight, from this out.—
What Limerick poet did your mother hark to,
That so you mete your singing, Seanchan?
[*He pronounces it 'Shanahan,' so that it scans.*]

MOORE:

My name is Thomas!—Irish Melodies;
That's what I want to talk about to-night.

YEATS (*tossing his hair back, and shaking his head*):
Ængus and Deirdre and Oisín are dead,
Grainne has fled with Diarmuid. I alone
Pace the Seven Woods, and on the width of Echtge
Maintain alone the honourable right of the poets.

MOORE (*singing flippantly*):

The harp that once its music shed
Through Tara's halls, you'd say,
Is mute (except for you), and dead
Is Tara's boom to-day.

(Chorus, Yeats!)—Tara-ra-boom——

YEATS (*disgusted*):

O *Pulchritudo, sero te amavi!*—

Moore, if your name be Thomas and not George—

MOORE:

Oh, breathe not his name; let it sleep in the shade,
And remember the row *Esther Waters* once made!

YEATS:

I'd have you know that Time's old lanthorn dims;
For, since you sang, the Celtic twilight has fallen;
And now Kathleen-ni-Houlihan veils her face
In all her shadowy hair unbound and wound.

MOORE :

Believe me, if all those enduring old charms,
That I sang of so oft in my day,
Survived in the lady you mention, her arms
Could never allure me to stay ;
I praised her as Erin—you dream of Kathleen,
And the Secret and Mystical Rose ;
But even your volumes are wearing the green,
So it's all a poetical pose !

YEATS (*half-consciously emulating the Shade's self-parody*) :

Impetuous bard, be still, be still !
Your manifold loves should never be told
Under the stars and the wandering moon ;
How could you dare to write so ill ?—
Such glutinous lyrics—and then be bold
To cover them up with a lovely tune ?

MOORE :

The Minstrel Boy to the dogs is gone,
And his toes are turned to the daisies ;
But still the sale of his Works goes on,
And the critics sing his praises.
'Quite right, too !' says the jovial bard,
'I fear no Irish rival ;
Your chances of success are marred
By your so-called Celtic Revival !'

YEATS (*dreaming*) :

But now, I was with Baile and Ailinn,
In the high hall of Tara, and on the tables
Haunches of deer, and manchets of white bread,
And red wine flowing from horns——

MOORE :

Ah ha ! red wine !

YEATS :

O puny trifler with the yellow foam
That tosses under the bare thorns on the beach,
Where the wild Sea of Desire is loud—
Your bubbles are brittle. Wine is not for you.

MOORE :

It used to be !

YEATS :

From the inviolate Rose
Breaks a great light ; white fingers thrust a crown
On the tossed hair of the poets——

MOORE (*with intention*) :

Cut it short !

YEATS (*in despair*) :

I will arise and go now, and go to Charing Cross,
And a small cabman hire there, of grey and mottled
face ;

Twelve brown pence will I give him, and one for the
poor old hoss,

And drive alone to a fly-blown place.

[*He goes.*

MOORE (*left singing*) :

I never loved the dear ' Gazette,'¹

That glads me with its light green page,

So heartily as when it set

Us two upon its stage——

[*Exit, pursued by a bear.*

¹ This first appeared in the *Westminster Gazette*.

Macbeth and the Three Caskets.

(*The Merchant of Venice*, Act II, sc. ix.)

Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house. PORTIA and NERISSA discovered. MACBETH rolls in, not really drunk, and speaks with the extreme care of the not really drunk.

MACBETH :

MY homeward purpose with Lord Falconbridge
Chopped with the wind and blew me back again.
I could na voyage with yon Englishman :
What's usquebaugh to him, or he to usquebaugh ?
That which hath made him drunk hath made me bold
To address me to this hazard. Here am I ;
What I would highly, I would holily.

[NERISSA *draws the curtain.*

MACBETH (*blinking*) :

Are these the caskets that I see before me ?

PORTIA :

They are, my lord ; myself in one of them.

MACBETH :

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done slowly. Silver, lead, and gold,
Lead, silver, gold ; three caskets, three inscriptions.
Now caution be my watchword ! What says lead ?
Who chooseth me must give and hazard all be bath.
A Scotsman give *and* hazard ? Hazard, aye ;

Who hazards, stands his chance to get again,
 But whoso gives can never show a profit.
 Begone, thou dull plumbago! What of gold?
Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.
 What many men desire—that may be well;
 Yet in the second place it may be ill—
 At least I'm sure it may be so in Scotland.
 I'll have no wife that many men desire;
 Gold may be bought too dear; lead is too cheap;
 And I was taught by hedge-school dominie
 'In medio tutissimus.' What's here?
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
 Desairves? Aye, that's the word! Let some desire,
 Let others give, but give me my desairts.
 I'll screw my courage to the sticking-place,
 And choose the silver. So, bang goes suspense.¹
He opens the casket, and reads, making every 's' a 'sh.'

'The fire seven times tried this:
 Seven times tried that judgement is
 That did never choose amiss.
 Some there be that shadows kiss;
 Such have but a shadow's bliss.
 There be fools alive, I wis,
 Silvered o'er—and so was this.

¹ This is the original form: unfortunately Macbeth inserted a *bic* between the *u* and the second *s*, whence the modern phrase.

Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head.
So begone : you are sped.'

NERISSA (*to* PORTIA) :

The Scotsman gets as much as he deserves ;
Choosing amiss, he has not chosen a mistress.

MACBETH :

Aweel, I'll take the casket for remembrance.

PORTIA :

Not so, my lord ; 'twill stand the choice again.

MACBETH :

Do you grudge me even this ? I did but try,
Seeking to make assurance doubly sure.

PORTIA :

You make me sure of your assurance, sir.

MACBETH :

Imph'm ! Then, lady, ere I take my leave,
I'd have you know your loss is none to me,
Seeing I have a wife in Inverness.
Maybe 'twere better done to bide with her
Than fly to others that I know not of.
Lady, farewell ! Your servant, not your lord.

He departs, murmuring :

Eh, my lord Falconbridge, I've won the bet !

'The Not Impossible She.'

A Dramatic Lyric.

A BACHELOR of common type,
I sit me down before the fire
And take my after-dinner pipe,—
My oldest, blackest, dearest briar,—
Which always seems to taste the better
If lighted with an old love-letter.

At length I feel my years discreet,
My way marked out—and I can pay it,—
Ripe intellect, and temper sweet,
And suave address, although I say it :
So, with a text from Richard Crashaw,
I look around me like a Bashaw.

I'm sure that some 'unconscious dove'
Is waiting patiently for me
To call, and to declare my love
In courtly style on bended knee—
To speak the word the Irish bard
Rightly denominates as 'hard.'

But how discover her address ?
For O, how many pounds I'd give

To hear her confidential YES—
 Significant affirmative !
Come to my aid, ye powers mighty,
Hymen, Eros, and Aphrodite !

Yet do not choose a maid in haste ;
 She might not do, if picked at random ;
What though I have a dainty taste ?
 De gustibus non disputandum.—
Lest she deceive my expectations,
I make the following stipulations.

Firstly, I make a sweeping clearance
 Of all who are blue-eyed and flaxen,
Because in personal appearance
 Myself I typify the Saxon ;
And therefore I have often felt
I would prefer to wed a Celt.

(Once for a maid of Wales I sighed,
 My landlord's daughter at Portmadoc ;
But she was soon disqualified
 By showing appetite for haddock :
No wife of mine shall eat that fish,
Nor serve it for my breakfast-dish.)

Next, if serene, though China fall,
And fond of exercise and air,
She need not be divinely tall,
She need not be divinely fair ;
Not mopy, languishing, or fragile,
But healthy, well-set-up, and agile.

Next, as to how her hair is done,—
I don't care much ; her taste is mine,
For diadem, or peak, or bun,
If only it be long and fine ;
But most on this her fate will hinge—
Whether or not she wears a fringe.

Then she must understand my jargon,
Her answers please both mind and ear :
On accent, if it's not *too* far gone,
One's judgement should not be severe,
For everybody thinks his own
The purest accent ever known.

Thus, through long evenings after tea,
While outside Winter shows his fury,
I'll lounge, and she will read to me
A book of verses, like the houri
Who read, unchaperoned, to Omar,
(They're freer there than we at home are).

And, by the way, I sometimes think
That he was happiest—the Persian
Who used to read and quaff and wink—
Though, it is true, FitzGerald's version
To jug and book omits to add
The fact of Omar's œilliad.¹

Yet if I were a mild Hindoo,
Or of some negroid proletariat,
Or had a hut in Timbuctoo,—
The place they ate the missionary at,—
Should I say *then* that Omar Khayyám
Was a much happier man than I am ?

No, says the true philosopher :
That is exactly what Lord Byron meant,
When he remarked that character
Depended largely on environment ;
For one man's honey t'other cloys on,
And this man's meat is that man's poison.—

Where was I ?—Then, in firelight glow,
I'll hear her singing from the shadow
The fragrant songs of long ago
And little things by Mr. Hadow,
Forsaking ditties of the *beau monde*
To croon the Bonny Banks of Lomond.

¹ *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act I, Scene 3.
which gives 44 "œillades"

She'll sing *My true love hath my heart ;*
Of a' the airts the wind can blow ;
Of all the girls that are so smart ;
And *How should I your true-love know ?—*
O Shakespeare, Carey, Burns, and Sidney,
If writers now were of your kidney !

POSTSCRIPT.—You'll see I said above
My spills are made of those old letters
Which on receipt I file as ' Love ' :
But whatsoever passion fetters
My inclination, years will dim it—
Six is my Statutory Limit.

So, writing this, I used a spill,
A *billet-doux* of six years since ;
And as it flamed, I read ' Your J——,'
A word, half ash, that made me wince :
Her name began with J ; the rest
For obvious reasons is suppressed.

I've written to her old address—
A charming village, served by carrier—
I've had her confidential YES ;
And—mark—although I'm going to marry her
She's not as stipulated. Still,
I've said I would, and now I will.

Distemper.

THE piano and my writing-desk are covered with a
pall,
And charwomen and chimney-sweeps foregather in the
hall ;
But the chlorophyll is climbing in the greenwood far
away—
Oh, 'tis there I'd like to lazy through the silent summer
day.

My wife is at the seaside with our younger olive branch,
The elder's paying visits, and they've all 'vamosed the
ranch' ;
I'm left alone among the crowd that sweeps and paints
and plumbs,
With a single-handed housemaid—and her fingers are all
thumbs.

My study—once the kitchen—has a door, but not a
bolt ;
The cat has got distemper, the canary tries to moult—
O Yellow Bird of Misery, why can't you turn to Blue ?
O *felis*, called *domesticus*, a House-Tylette are you !

There's a pail of creamy liquid with a sanitary smell—
It is 'durable' and 'patent' and it's 'washable' as well—
But it's NOT a wholesome item in the commissariat,
For I think it's *this* distemper which has indisposed the
cat.

By the Gardens of Phraskâtiĥ.

(At a Dinner of the Omar Khayyâm Club.)

‘DRAW nigh the Board’—one came to me and said—
‘Nigh Winter-Gardens of Phraskâtiĥ spread ;
The Rose shall blossom in thy Button-hole,
The Fruits of Earth are ripe, her Wine is red.’

‘Nay, Nay,’ I answered ; ‘once it might have been :
Now, they who o’er the Beaker long to lean
Push it aside, and in the Pipkin pour
Ammoniated Tincture of Quinine.

‘Alas, my Spring has vanished with the Rose,
My Clay is moulded into Adipose ;
He knows, who plucked, the Thorn is in his Thumb ;
He knows, who tasted, Fruits have Salt—Eno’s.

‘Against the rich historic Recipe
The Moving Finger writes *IT-USED-TO-BE* :
The Goose is cooked ; the Bon-Vivant to-day
Keeps but a poor dysPepysy’s Diary.

‘Yet hail, Ingrate, the Kindliness that sets
The Cup that clears To-day of past Regrets !
To-morrow ?—Why, to-morrow I may spend
Imbibing Lethe—Lithia Varalettes.

‘ A truce to doubting Whither, Why, and Whence :
And when, replenish’d, we shall shuffle hence,
 Oh, may a Cup of that forbidden Wine
Be my excuse for this Impertinence ! ’

A Study in Pink.

I

BROWN had a studio, Chelsea-way,
And painted there throughout the day,
And lived on bacon and beef and bread,
And looked on the wine when it was red,
And smoked large pipes in a velvet coat,
Being indeed an artist ;
One Jones lived with him—a man who wrote
(An artist, he'd say, in black-and-white)—
Who wrote in the watches of the night,
Taking his chance of getting a bite
As soon as his paper was ' put to bed '—
And dawn turned Bouverie Street dull red—
The only time he should *not* have fed.
These lived together, and each liked each.
But men, in their ungrammatical speech,
Said ' Jones, you know, is the smartest.'

II

Drayton-on-Wold is a quaint old place,
Quiet and slow as the old mill-race
Under the willows beyond Monks' Mill,
Whose waters have aged since they left the hill.

In Domesday Book its name is writ—

Nunquam geldam reddidit.

And the old millstones have lost their grit ;

Upper and Nether are both so old

That in Waterloo year the two were rolled

To lie in the nettles with broken chunks

Of the ancient home of forgotten monks,

From whose old dormitory

(Partly destroyed by bluff King Hal,

And come to dust, as all things shall)

A yeoman, who bore a pike at Edgehill,

Built—so county historians say—

The present Jacobean mill.

But life goes round in the mill to-day,

And Miss Gertrude is a live young gal,

And this is a modern story.

The miller, suffering from debt

And agricultural depression,

Stopped his wheels without regret,

And looked about for a new profession.

And while he looked, his goodwife set

A card in her window—‘ Rooms to let.’

So he bred pigs, and she let rooms,

And Gertrude bloomed as the hawthorn blooms.

III

Hither, in flight from an August town,
In search of fishing, came Jones and Brown.
Jones wrote typical topical notes
On *How the Country Cousin Lives*,
Splitting a hundred infinitives,
And Brown sketched 'bits,' as they watched their
floats

From noon to seven-thirty ;
And when they had supped (they scorned to dine)
Jones talked pigs to his host till nine
And then wrote 'pars' at twopence a line ;
While Brown, to soothe his artistic soul,
Escorted on many an evening stroll
(And probably kissed) Miss Gertie.

IV

Now, this is a somewhat curious thing ;
When Love was bound in a little gold ring,
And he kissed her, and she kissed him,
Brown's artistic eye grew dim
With a teardrop winking at the brim. . . .
But they blest the couple, the old folks did ;
And Jones, smart Jones, was a *quintum quid*.

V

Alas, how easily things go wrong !
While all the world was love and a song,
 And he wanted *her* for a sitter,
Brown, at the wish of the fair Gertrude,
Painted a sow and her pink pig brood,
Taking particular pains to get
A portrait of Gertie's particular pet,
 The fattest of the litter.
Brown was pleased with the whole effect.
But Gertie, when she stood to inspect,
 Arm-in-arm with her lover,
Suddenly sniffed, began to cry,
Wouldn't be kissed or comforted,
Hated him, and wished she was dead ;
Ran to her mother, went to bed,
Tossed and turned till the sun was high,
Rose with eyes dark-ringed and dry,
Gave him his ring, and said good-bye,
Kissing him once—but the reason *why*
 Brown could never discover.

VI

Some day when you go to see
At a well-known public gallery

Sir Percival Brown's 'A Study in Pink,'
Look at the fattest pig. I think,
Granted the gift of the seeing eye,
You'll see Miss Gertie's reason why.
A plump pink porker, smiling wide,
Flown with mangel-wurzel and pride,
 Wallowing, gruntyful, sated ;
Innocent, too, on life's wide brink,
 Unsophisticated ;
'Die to-morrow ? let's eat and drink '
Seems to sound from his chaps so pink ;
No self-knowledge or self-control,
No ambition, no hope, no Soul ;
Only a Body, in pink, pink skin. . . .
The poor girl saw Her Self therein.
 And that's what Gertie hated.

VII

The usual rule with man and girl
Is just the opposite ; she's the pearl,
And he the hog. . . .

 But Time atones.

Next year Gertrude married Jones.

'Form Fours.'

A Volunteer's Nightmare.

IF you're Volunteer Artist or Athlete, or if you defend
the Home,
You sacrifice 'Ease' for 'Attention,' and march like a
metronome ;
But of all elementary movements you learn in your
Volunteer Corps
The one that is really perplexing is known as the Forming
of Fours.

Imagine us numbered off from the right : the Sergeant
faces the squad,
And says that the odd files do not move—I never seem to
be odd !
And then his instructions run like this (very simple in
black and white)—
'A pace to the rear with the left foot, and one to the
right with the right.'

Of course if you don't think deeply, you do it without a
hitch ;
You have only to know your right and left, and remember
which is which ;

But as soon as you try to be careful, you get in the deuce
of a plight,
With ' a pace to the right with the left foot, and one to
the rear with the right ! '

Besides, when you're thoroughly muddled the Sergeant
doubles your doubt
By saying that rules reverse themselves, as soon as you're
' turned about ' ;
So round you go on your right heel, and practise until
you are deft
At ' a pace to the front with the right foot, and one to
the left with the left.'

In my dreams the Sergeant, the Kaiser, and Kipling mix
my feet,
Saying ' East is left, and Right is Might, and never the
twain shall meet ! '
In my nightmare squad *all* files are odd, and their Fours
are horribly queer,
With ' a pace to the left with the front foot, and one to
the right with the rear ! '

Mark Macintosh's Lyrical Monologue.

Made at the 'Cock.'

ALFRED, headwaiter at the 'Cock'
Where nowadays I dine,
Go fetch me—it is eight o'clock—
My usual glass of wine ;
I'll sing, as sang in happier days
The Laureate—*prosit omen!*—
Who gave your predecessor praise,
And left you his prænomen.

For who but you has power to charm
The heart that's out of tune,
And antiquarian minds disarm
Of yearnings for the moon?—
While Hygieia plies her craft,
And doctors are despotic,
While men but sip where once they quaffed
And own themselves neurotic ;

While yet we read in history
Of those 'two-bottle' names,
And marvel not, but merely sigh
For our enfeebled frames :—

Perchance the air my ancestors
 Inhaled, was antiseptic ;
Perchance a life spent out of doors
 Maintained them more eupeptic.

I drink your health in fellowship,
 Will Waterproof, my Will ;
Like you I love to sit and sip
 My after-dinner gill ;
Methinks we are of kindred sort,
 Full-blooded, shrewd, and youthful,
Yet, where you took your pint of port,
 I take a modest toothful.

Reason enough—I hear your scorn—
 Why these half-hearted lines
Boast little of the vigour born
 Of more heroic vines :
Besides, I plead this vintage apes
 The liquor loved of Spaniards—
Smacks less of true Oporto grapes
 Than South Australian tanyards.

I wail an age degenerate :
 'Tis truth the poet sings,
The glories of our blood and state
 Are not substantial things ;

The Muse has drunk herself to death,
And Moschus has his Bion,
And dead is Queen Elizabeth,
And dead is King Pandion.

O souls of poets dead and gone !
Saint Dunstan's by the Fleet
From you a passing splendour won—
'Twas just across the street ;
The choruses that there you sang
Are echoes now and hollow ;
We can but guess how loudly rang
The rafters in the Apollo ;

Where Jonson held high revelry
And learnt from sack his art,
Where, maybe, with good ale for key,
Shakespeare unlocked his heart.
Ah, how you crowned your cups of yore
And toasted gallant lasses,
While shuffling on the sanded floor
Sim Wadlowe filled your glasses !

Alfred—I murmur, but he hears
Above the clash of plates—
Go fetch the coffee-cup that cheers
But not intoxicates :
A touch, a flame, the charm is snapt,
The hour of hours is pending,
And nomad Fancy straight is rapt
To watch the clouds ascending.

This bean has travelled many a mile;
'Twas grown by Cingalese
In lands where only man is vile
And all the prospects please.
This cigarette was rolled perchance
Beside the Euxine coast-ring,
And still is fragrant of romance,
Harim, and sack, and bowstring.

Alas ! but coffee only serves
As Bacchus' antidote ;
My Lady Nicotine unnerves
The poet's liquid throat ;
Supposing Doctor Middleton
Had lit a Larranaga,
The vine had lost a champion,
And Port her noblest saga.

So, Alfred, take away the cup,
Put out the cigarette ;
While Fancy, ere I give her up,
Shows one more vision yet ;
For when I tread the asphodel,
Alfred, I think your spectre
Will dance attendance there as well
And pour for me the nectar.

When I am old and full of sleep,
And wine is no more red,
Into my narrow grave I'll creep
And let no more be said ;
For other men this wine shall flow
And make them maudlin-clever,
For they shall come, and they shall go,
And you will wait—for ever ?

Another Alfred may arise
And to remoter time
Dispense like hospitalities
With manners as sublime :
Your fame shall stand, as stands an oak
More honoured in the gnarling,
And men shall eat and drink and smoke
And think of England's Darling.

The time will come, and that ere long,
As cooler grows my blood,
When swanlike I shall end my song
And gently take the flood ;
But now, to celebrate the strife,
I'll carve on Fancy's trophy—
One clouded hour of vinous life
Is worth an age of coffee.

I thank you for that glass of wine,
And bless the hand that gave ;
It filled me with a fire divine,
And made me Fancy's slave ;
God grant I feel this same good-will
To all men, when I slip hence :
So, Alfred, if you please, my bill,
And here's your usual threepence.

Narrative Macaronic Verses.

(From the Bankolidaid, Lib. I.)

CHARMER virumque I sing, Jack plumigeramque
Arabellam.

Costermonger erat Jack Jones, asinumque agitabat ;
In Covent Garden holus, sprouts vendidit asparagumque.
Vendidit in Circo to the toffs Arabella the donah,
Qua Piccadilly propinquat to Shaftesbury Avenue, flores.

Jam Whitmonday adest ; ex Newington Causeway the
costers

Erumpunt multi celebrare their annual beano ;
Quisque suum billycock habuere, et donah ferentes,
Impositique rotis, popularia carmina singing,
Happy with ale omnes—exceptis excipiendis.
Gloomily drives Jack Jones, inconsolabilis heros ;
No companion habet, solus sine virgine coster.
Per Boro', per Fleet Street, per Strand, sic itur ad ' Em-
pire ' ;
Illinc Coventry Street peragunt in a merry procession,
Qua Piccadilly propinquat to Shaftesbury Avenue tandem
Gloomily Jack vehitur. Sed amet qui never amavit !

En ! subito fugiunt dark thoughts ; Arabella videtur.
Quum subit illius pulcherrima bloomin' imago,
Corde juvat Jack Jones ; exclamat loudly ' What oh,
there ! '

Maiden ait ' Deus, ecce deus ! ' floresque relinquit.
Post asinum sedet illa ; petunt Welsh Harp prope Hendon.

O fons Brent Reservoir ! recubans sub tegmine brolli,
Brachia complexus (yum yum !) Jack kissed Arabella ;
' Garn ' ait illa rubens, et ' Garn ' reboatur ab Echo ;
Propositique tenax Jack ' Swelp me lummy, I loves yer.'
Hinc illae lacrimae ; ' Jest one ! ' et ' Saucy, give over.'

Tempora jam mutantur, et hats ; caligine cinctus
Oscula Jones iterat, mokoque immittit habenas.
Concertina manu sixteen discrimina vocum
Obloquitur ; cantant (ne saevi, magne policeman)
Noctem in Old Kent Road. Sic transit gloria Monday.

A Mediæval Romance.

JOHANNES, son of Gilbert, born
At Warren Magna, com. Wigorn.,
Till one-and-twenty simple John,
Cast his eyes on Alison ;
Spouted, fourteenth-century wise,
Odes to his ' parvenke of price ' ;
Loved and lost his ' parfit perle,'
Who was indeed a common girl ;
Forswore the world and joined instead
A priory, and shaved his head,
Learnt reading, writing, Latin : thus
Non nascitur, fit monachus.

His priory can still be seen,
Though ruined, by the village green
Where children used to gather round
Brother Johannes on the ground ;
For none had tales so good to tell,
And none could tell the tales so well.
And when the dragon had been killed,
The giant's doom at length fulfilled,
When the princess, that lady bright,
Was safely married to her knight,
Brother Johannes let them dip

Their hands into his magic scrip ;
And Warren's orchards were the pride,
And still are, of that countryside.

The priory had another claim,
And this to more enduring fame.
Johannes, travelling overseas
In youth, had met Jehan de Grise,
And many were the pains he took
To learn his craft to limn a book :
And, once again to Warren come,
In the Refectorium
Showed them how the skin was ripped
To make a vellum manuscript ;
How to stretch the parchment tight,
How (with pounce) to make it white ;
Taught them to make cinnabar,
Lampblack, gum, and vinegar ;
How to temper, how to use
Azure, roset, and ceruse ;
How upon a stone to mill
Ochre, alum-glass, brazil ;
How to size, and lay with care
Goldleaf on the tacky glair
With the pencil and the brush,
And burnish it with wild-boar's tush.

Year in, year out, from day to day
He taught the novices the way
To make such books, and write therein
The tender carols that begin
'Thys endris nyght a chyld is born
To save mankynd that was forlorn';
And little songs of 'briddës roun'
When Lenten comes with love to town.

Johannes had one annual sin,
Committed when the days begin
To lengthen out in early May,
And bloom is on the hawthorn spray.
And this one sin was worse by far
Than sudden moral lapses are;
These are spontaneous, done by chance;
That, calculated in advance.

For yearly, on the first of May,
Johannes woke before the day,
And couched in his ascetic cell
Spent the long hour till matin-bell
In sinful dreaming. First he heard
Some timid whistle of a bird
That was not sure the night was gone,
But wished he dared to sing alone.

Next, a swallow flying high
And balancing in palest sky,
The world below him lying dumb,
Would pipe the signal, ' Day has come ' ;
And then the birds would hail the light
And sing a requiem to night ;
And then the scent of may would rise
And tears would fill Johannes' eyes . . .

He could not but recall the day—
Years ago, that first of May !—
When rising early he had gone
To gather may with Alison ;
And how they rambled hand-in-hand
Through the summer-breathing land,
Plucked the white and pulled the red,
What he whispered, what she said . . .
Just a word : they rambled on.
Cruel pretty Alison ! . . .

Then through the year he would redeem
By penance his May-morning dream.

Johannes never sang his *Nunc*
Dimittis, as becomes a monk.

One first-of-May the matin-bell
Failed to rouse him from the spell ;
And even when the prior spake
Exhorting him, he did not wake—
Nor slept, but lay with eyes astare,
Stroking the shaggy pelt of bear
That covered him : the tufted curls
Felt as soft as any girl's . . .
The brethren watched ; perhaps a few
Guessed the cause—the prior knew ;
And, kneeling, for his soul's release,
Absolved him, and he died in peace.

They buried him beneath the aisle.
The children missed him—for a while.

The Lament of the Sailor's Widow.

OH! he said I had the neatest hands—the sweetest
in the world, my hands ;

He said that love had curled my hands to cling about
his heart ;

He put my head to rest

On the strength of his breast—

Oh ! the happiness I learned when his red lips burned
With the honey of his whisper : ‘Till death us do part !’

And by night he had the dear hands, and near about my
waist his hands ;

’Twas then that he laced his hands to clasp me to his side ;

I took his head to rest

On the throb of my breast—

But the wind began to blow, and he had to rise and go :
And my tears cannot reach him in the deep blind tide !

Ah, ’tis you that have the slenderest, the tenderest of all
hands,

’Tis you that have the small hands, O tiny son o’ mine !

On the heave of my breast

Let your little lips rest ;

For alas ! they shall know, as the long years go,

Both the sweet o’ the honey and the bitter o’ the brine !

1914.

THE heirs of cultured ages, we
Fashioned an idol for all to see.
We all could see—or thought we saw—
A goddess of liberty and law,
Inheritor of Rome and Greece,
Monopolist of the arts of peace,
Symbol of all the good in life
Won for us by our fathers' strife :
She topped our Western scroll of fame—
Civilisation was her name.

Yet we who looked on her splendid youth
Dared not leave her naked as Truth ;
And so we crowned her beautiful head
With a cap of liberty (made of lead),
Collared her neck in steel, and dressed
Her gleaming limbs with an iron vest.
We saw she was fair ; and we were vain :
The Garden of Eden over again !
We would not see the devil behind.
O fools and blind ! O fools and blind !

God forgive us!—every one
Who dares to ask a place in the sun—
His sun, that He has made to shine
To give us corn and oil and wine.
For all our building fair and straight
Is tumbled with a puff of hate,
And all the splendour that we planned
Totters upon the bloody sand
Where 'wilderer sheep have met their doom,
Driven to slaughter . . . for what ? for whom ?

Because Man cannot be content
Humbly to take what God has sent :
Because Man says ' My cause is just,
Others' aggrandisement is lust.'
Because Man claims the right divine
To say ' This is—that shall be—mine.'
O still the Devil whispers fear
Into every human ear,
And will so whisper, till all is done.—
God forgive us, every one !

.
Bow we our heads and humbly pray
That, if this terror may pass away,

We may not preen our horrid pride
That fortune fought upon our side ;
Rather, God grant we may begin
To expiate our common sin,
And guide our souls, which still the flesh
Must captive hold in quivering mesh,
To bow to His eternal plan
And better love our brother-man.

A Christmas Legend.

ABROAD on a winter's night there ran
Under the starlight, leaping the rills
Swollen with snow-drip from the hills,
Goat-legged, goat-bearded Pan.

He loved to run on the crisp white floor,
Where black hill-torrents chiselled grooves,
And he loved to print his clean-cut hooves,
Where none had trod before.

And now he slacked and came to a stand
Beside a river too broad to leap ;
And as he panted he heard a sheep
That bleated near at hand.

' Bell-wether, bell-wether, what do you say ?
Peace, and huddle your ewes from cold ! '

' Master, but ere we went to fold
Our herdsman hastened away :

' Over the hill came other twain
And pointed away to Bethlehem,
And spake with him, and he followed them,
And has not come again.

‘ He dropped his pipe of the river-reed ;
He left his scrip in his haste to go ;
And all our grazing is under snow,
So that we cannot feed.’

‘ Left his sheep on a winter’s night ? ’—
Pan folded them with an angry frown.
‘ Bell-wether, bell-wether, I’ll go down
Where the star shines bright.’

Down by the hamlet he met the man.
‘ Shepherd, no shepherd, thy flock is lorn ! ’
‘ Master, no master, a child is born
Royal, greater than Pan.

‘ Lo, I have seen ; I go to my sheep ;
Follow my footsteps through the snow,
But warily, warily see thou go,
For child and mother sleep.’

Into the stable-yard Pan crept,
And there in a manger a baby lay
Beside his mother upon the hay,
And mother and baby slept.

Pan bent over the sleeping child,
Gazed on him, panting after his run :
And while he wondered, the little one
 Opened his eyes and smiled ;

Smiled, and after a little space
Struggled an arm from the swaddling-band,
And raising a tiny dimpled hand,
 Patted the bearded face.

Something snapped in the breast of Pan ;
His heart, his throat, his eyes were sore,
And he wished to weep as never before
 Since the world began.

And out he went to the silly sheep,
To the fox on the hill, the fish in the sea,
The horse in the stall, the bird in the tree,
 Asking them how to weep.

They could not teach—they did not know ;
The law stands writ for the beast that's dumb
That a limb may ache and a heart be numb,
 But never a tear can flow.

So bear you kindly to-day, O Man,
To all that is dumb and all that is wild,
For the sake of the Christmas Babe who smiled
In the eyes of great god Pan.

But an older legend ran:-
At the birth of the Son of Man
A sigh sped round the world and said
"Great Pan is dead!"

The Annual Stocktaking.

'A Lytil Sooth Sermun.'

IF, on December 31,
When the old year is nearly run,
And night is nearing twelve o'clock,
You turn your mind to taking stock,
Seeking what progress has been made,
What ghosts of ancient evil laid,
What combats fought and lost or won,
What has been thought and said and done—
Your conscience fills the debit side
With scenes of sin and evil pride ;
Of man still chewing Disobedience,
And putting Good below Expedience ;
Of craft and fear, and fraud and guile,
Where all, including Man, is vile ;
Of spite and strife, of hates and wars,
Of prejudice and Man-made laws—
In short, an out-of-joint-ful time,
As vulgar as my cockney rhyme. . . .

Now, as you stand two years between,
Now consider the might-have-been ;
Look you back and count the cost
Of every little moment lost ;

The moment's gone, and though you would
You cannot make that moment good ;
And you who walked and would not run,
Have lost the race you might have won.

*To get the whole world out of bed,
And washed, and dressed, and warmed, and fed,
To work, and back to bed again,
Believe me, Saul, costs worlds of pain.*

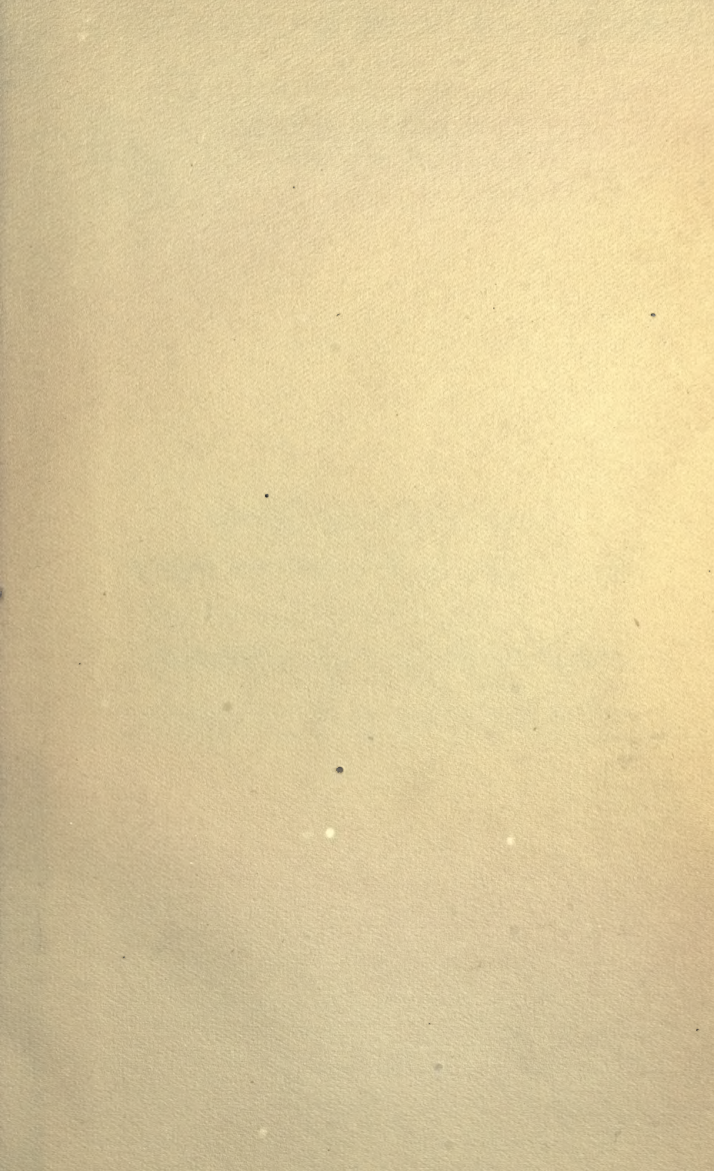
The poet sees, in those four verses,
Gleams of everlasting mercies. . . .

So when the morning rises red,
Remember that the world's in bed,
And you have got to share its pain
Before it gets to bed again.
Go out into the dust and heat,
And justify the food you eat ;
Mind, if you overeat, you burke
Excess by equal overwork,
For body and spirit and mind likewise
Thrive alone by exercise.
Success won't keep your spirit hale ;
Sometimes it's good for you to fail ;

But when you fail, do not complain,
But take your failure up again,
And turn to see its other side :
All will not fail, if all be tried.

And should you hear the weakling drone,
' He runs the best who runs alone,'
Tell him he lives by means, not ends ;
You cannot run without your friends ;
And friends are they to whom you give
All that can help them best to live ;
And though the giving of all your store
Only burdens you the more,
Grin and bear it—and having grinned,
You'll find, maybe, your second wind !

So give yourself, nor strike a balance
Between your tales of toils and talents :
All for all, not each for each . . .
And so, once more into the breach !



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Sidgwick, Frank
Some verse

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